DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 475 520 FL 027 638

AUTHOR	Tarnopolsky, Oleg; Kozhushko, Svitlana
TITLE	Playing Business in the Classroom: Designing a New Type of Business English Coursebook.
PUB DATE	2002-03-00
NOTE	23p.; Revised version of paper presented at the Annual Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Greece Convention (23rd, Athens, Greece, March 9-10, 2002).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Business Communication; *Business Education; *Business English; Cooperative Learning; Curriculum Development; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Instructional Materials; Integrated Activities; Interpersonal Communication; Personal Autonomy; Second Language Instruction; Student Projects; Teaching Methods; Textbook Preparation
IDENTIFIERS	Ukraine

ABSTRACT

This article notes that one constraint to learning business English in Eastern Europe, particularly in the Ukraine, is the lack of adequate and culturally-relevant textbooks and other teaching materials. It suggests that the best solution would be to write a new textbook that combines the latest achievements of the western world with cultural realities of the Ukraine. It describes the development of such a textbook, Business Projects, that includes all of these features and is communication-oriented, task-based, and content-based. The book's six design features include the following: use of continuous simulation (modeling and enacting of business activities and communication in class); promotion of student autonomy in learning business English; use of student project activities; use of the integrated-skill approach; use of cooperative learning; and introduction of a fictitious setting (in which textbook materials are connected to an imaginary country where imaginary businesses operate). Evaluation of the effectiveness of this textbook compared to that of a traditional western textbook indicated that it had significant advantages over typical western textbooks in developing learners' communication skills and enhancing students' positive learning motivation. Results showed that using the textbook significantly accelerated the development of learner's business English communication skills. (Contains 10 references.) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

PLAYING BUSINESS IN THE CLASSROOM: DESIGNING A NEW TYPE OF BUSINESS ENGLISH COURSEBOOK[1]

Oleg Tarnopolsky and Svitlana Kozhushko
Dnipropetrovsk University of Economics and Law, Ukraine

ED 475 520

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Oleg Tarnopolsky

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

FL027638

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PLAYING BUSINESS IN THE CLASSROOM: DESIGNING A NEW TYPE OF BUSINESS ENGLISH COURSEBOOK[1]

Oleg Tarnopolsky and Svitlana Kozhushko
Dnipropetrovsk University of Economics and Law, Ukraine

Introduction

Learning Business English is gathering momentum in Eastern Europe, especially in the countries of the former USSR, such as Ukraine. But the desire of increasing numbers of learners to acquire BE and the efforts of teachers to teach it efficiently are hindered by the lack of adequate coursebooks and other teaching materials. Both the teachers and the students justifiably voice their absolute dissatisfaction with the existing coursebooks on Business English that were published in Ukraine and other countries of the former USSR. They are mostly obsolete and inadequate in all respects - the language, the suggested ways and methods of teaching and learning, the contents, the design and structure. This problem cannot be solved by substituting them with Western coursebooks. Those are not so easy to access in Ukraine and are often too expensive. Besides, they don't take into account the local conditions and students' background knowledge. So the best solution would be writing a new coursebook of Business English that would combine the latest Western achievements in teaching it with taking into consideration the local conditions, the background knowledge, and mentality of Ukrainian students.

Writing such a coursebook means developing the concept of it and, first of all, deciding for what category of students the coursebook is to be designed. From that point of view, learners of Business English may be divided into two broad categories. The first includes people who already work in business, know their jobs and what they have and need to say when doing them. They just do not know and want to learn how to say it in English. That is why their attitude to learning English is usually quite serious and matter-of-fact. They want to learn what they need of English as quickly as possible and be done with it - no matter if learning itself is rather boring. It seems that a lot of existing Business English coursebooks are designed mostly for that category of students.

But there is another category, also quite broad. At any rate, in Ukraine it is much broader than the first one. It includes those young people from business schools, colleges, and universities majoring in business studies who lack not only the knowledge of English at the start of those studies. Their ideas of their future jobs, of business as a whole are also rather vague with little or no practical experience in that area. Working with just that category of learners, we have noticed quite a specific phenomenon. When such students learn Business English using existing coursebooks (the best Western BE coursebooks included), what is written in them does not seem quite real to the learners. Moreover, it often seems a little, or not a little, boring, despite cartoons, funny pictures, authentic materials in a lot of state-of-the-art

[1] The article is an enlarged and revised version of the presentation (titled *Classroom Business: Six Features of Business English Coursebook Design*) made at the 23rd Annual TESOL Greece Convention March 10, 2002.

FL027638

Business English coursebooks. It is most probably the psychological effect of learning Business English in a non-English-speaking country where nobody uses English outside the classroom. But whatever the causes are, the students' feeling of unreality and their feeling of boredom is a great obstacle to successfully teaching Business English.

Therefore, having undertaken the task of writing a Business English coursebook just for such students, we approached that task from the point of view of developing a specific coursebook concept. The basis of the concept was the necessity of making the process of doing business in English not academic and abstract but quite psychologically real to those particular students who have never practically worked in business yet and who learn BE as a foreign language in a non-English-speaking country. The process of doing business in English had to become not only psychologically real to the learners. It also had to become fun (together with learning Business English).

To achieve those ends in designing the coursebook, which was titled *Business Projects*, all the approaches that are used in most modern coursebooks on Business English have been employed. The coursebook consists of a *Student's Book*, *Workbook*, *Teacher's Book*, and a class cassette. All the materials are totally business communication oriented so that students mostly learn Business English via communication that imitates or models genuine business communication (Ellis & Johnson, 1994). The coursebook is task-based since learning assignments are different tasks from the area of business that students have to solve using English as a tool (Prabhu, 1987). It is content-based because everything that is learned of Business English is learned through the content matter from the areas of business, marketing, etc. (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989). It is also theme-based because all the learning activities and information are focused on and develop a number of themes that in their entirety cover all the selected content-matter (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989). Finally, case studies are a regular feature making an integral part of every unit.

But there are several other peculiar features of the coursebook that, in their combination, characterize only this and no other Business English coursebook and the concept underlying its design.

The Concept of the Coursebook (Six Basic Features of its Design)

The first of such features is the use of what was called **continuous simulation** as the principal learning activity. All the other learning activities lead to that one and prepare learners for it. Continuous simulation is a specific organization of the Business English course when learning develops as continuous modeling and enacting of business activities and communication in class. The enactment is done in the framework of almost life-size functioning of an imaginary firm or company. Students themselves invent it, "set it up", organize its "functioning", and "work" in that firm or company. It is a kind of play where learners themselves are actors, directors, and playwrights on an on-going basis. Continuous simulation, unlike traditional simulations, which usually are disconnected episodes in the learning process, creates a common meaningful plot for learning and communicative activities in the course, that plot being developed from class to class. Students decide what form of business they will organize, what the structure and management hierarchy of their firm will be; they organize the firm, elect or appoint its top executives, find, interview, and select

employees; define the place of their business in the economy of the country; they do marketing research, solve financial problems, participate in fairs, sign contracts, etc.

This common plot developing from class to class, common participating personages create an imaginary life continuum in which students learn both Business English and business itself by constantly playing it in conditions imitating or modeling business environment. Continuous simulations, as a tool in Business English teaching, were first presented at IATEFL 1998 Manchester conference (Tarnopolsky, 2000). But then a continuous simulation was something superimposed by the teacher on a more traditional Business English course and coursebook. Now it has become the leading organizing principle of both.

What is very important is the fact that in continuous simulation the modeled business environment is created by students themselves who develop the plot when they play business. It makes students' communication highly creative and imaginative. Learners' creativity and imagination is what the entire approach in developing the coursebook is based on. That approach was named *BET 3C - Business English Through Continuous Creative Communication.*

The second distinguishing feature of the coursebook is the direct consequence and result of the BET 3C approach. It is **students' autonomy in learning Business English** (Benson & Voller, 1997). They are autonomous not only when doing the continuous simulation. All the assignments in the coursebook are designed to ensure that autonomy. Students discuss different points stating their own opinions and using their background knowledge, they read texts and listen to talks and conversations to find information that they lack for their own discussions and conversations on certain topics, they write about the results of their discussions to state their own ideas in writing. Thus, they autonomously decide what to do and say and how to do and say that - learning while doing and saying it. The task of the coursebook and the teacher is not so much to teach as to organize learning and facilitate it. It does not mean that the coursebook has no parts that in the actual instruction process require teacher-dependent and teacher-fronted learning activities. But they are more of the nature of junction points stimulating and initiating further activities where learners are autonomous or totally independent. It is this distinguishing feature of the coursebook and the course organized on its basis that is believed to be instrumental in developing learners' skills and abilities required to become *independent users* of Business English.

The third distinguishing feature of the coursebook concept and design is also the consequence of the BET 3C approach. It is **the use of project work** (Fried-Booth, 1996). During all the course the students have to do project tasks that are an integral part of continuous simulation. They serve for preparing learners to play episodes in that simulation. For example, if an episode is connected with reporting the results of market research, playing the episode is preceded by project work. The project task requires students to collect material for their report and write its abstract with the main points before doing the actual presentation. Such writing is done on the basis of learners' discussions in pairs or small groups that are also parts of continuous simulation. In this way, written project tasks not only prepare students for the following episodes, but form links between episodes.

They also summarize all the continuous simulation activities because after "founding" their firm at the start of the course, the students immediately get the assignment of writing the firm's prospectus - the assignment that is done until the end of the course. At the end of every unit, learners write one section of that prospectus

where all the work done in the unit is summarized. For instance, on finishing Unit 2 (*Company Structure*), the students write the section of the prospectus where the structure of their firm and its management hierarchy are described. After Unit 5 (*Domestic and World Economy*), they write a section discussing their firm's place in the economy of the country, and it goes like that from unit to unit. That makes the results of written project tasks the visible material products of everything done in the course. They and the entire work in the course find their full expression in the final product - the prospectus of learners' imaginary firm written and prepared for publishing by themselves. Writing and preparing for publishing (typing, formatting, finding or creating illustrative materials for the prospectus, etc.) are very important for the success of continuous simulation. They are one of the principal means of making that simulation seem "real life" because real material products of firm's functioning are demonstrated.

The project work is also the leading means of developing students' writing skills in the course. As a result, the skills developed are somewhat different from those ordinarily set as the goals of teaching writing for business purposes in courses of Business English. They are not so much the skills of writing some standard business documents as the skills of writing creatively on business issues (writing compositions and essays that have business activities as their content matter and that are the essence of project tasks). Developing such skills seems to be more important than teaching students to write several types of standard business letters and other standard business papers. If creative writing skills are developed, developing skills of writing standard business documents becomes a comparatively simple task.

What has been said about the use of project work can be summarized, first, by remarking that, thanks to it, writing in the suggested course of Business English becomes as creative and continuous as speaking in continuous simulation. Second, this writing may be considered the focal point of continuous simulation. It is so because everything done by the students to get ready for continuous simulation or to demonstrate its results is gathered in students' project work writings as in a focus. That was the reason for the name of the coursebook - *Business Projects* - since project work done in writing reflects all the other communicative activities in the course. Speaking has just being mentioned, but it concerns reading and listening as well. They are also done as creative activities because learners read or listen to some information for using it in their continuous simulation, i.e., for transforming it creatively in their speaking. But since everything that the students say during continuous simulation is reflected and transformed in their own writing in the process of project work, the information obtained from reading and listening in English passes through no less than two creative transformations - in learners' own speaking and in their writing.

The use of project work as one of the basic features underlying the concept of the coursebook leads to the emergence of one more feature. It has already been said that students' speaking in continuous simulation depends on their preparatory project work done in writing. This speaking is also summarized in written project assignments which, in their turn, depend on preceding discussions, brainstorming, etc., i.e., on speaking. The material both for speaking and writing is taken from what students read and listen to. That means absolute interconnectedness and interdependence of developing all the four basic communication skills (speaking, reading, listening, writing). Those four skills are developed not separately from each other but in unison so that reading and listening support speaking and writing while speaking and writing reinforce the language material to be used for further

development of reading and listening skills. This is **the integrated-skill approach** (Oxford, 2001), and its systematic implementation as one of the conceptual features of the coursebook makes its fourth difference from a lot of other Business English coursebooks.

There is the fifth distinguishing feature as well. This feature is made necessary by the high degree of learners' autonomy. That requires learners' mutual help and pooling of their efforts, so in the coursebook and the course organized on its basis the focus is on **cooperative learning** (Kessler, 1992), instead of on traditional individual learning. Almost all the principal activities in the coursebook are designed to be done in pairs or small groups. It concerns project work, continuous simulation, all kinds of discussions and brainstorming, etc. Doing all such learning tasks, students are required to pool their efforts. Such pooling is aimed at increasing the learning effect in comparison with the assignments done individually - students not only learn themselves but teach each other and learn from each other. In the concept of the coursebook under discussion, unlike a lot of others, cooperative learning is not just one of the approaches used to organize the learning process. It is the foundation of its organization, the basis of all learning activities not only in class but also outside it.

Learners' autonomy also conditions the sixth, last, distinguishing feature of the coursebook concept. It is **the introduction of fictitious setting**. A lot of materials in the coursebook (texts, dialogues, case studies, etc.) are connected to an imaginary fictitious country - Bacardia - where imaginary fictitious businesses operate. While organizing the continuous simulation at the very start of using the coursebook, the teacher is also recommended to suggest to her or his students to locate the firm that they are setting up in an imaginary country - for instance, in the same Bacardia.

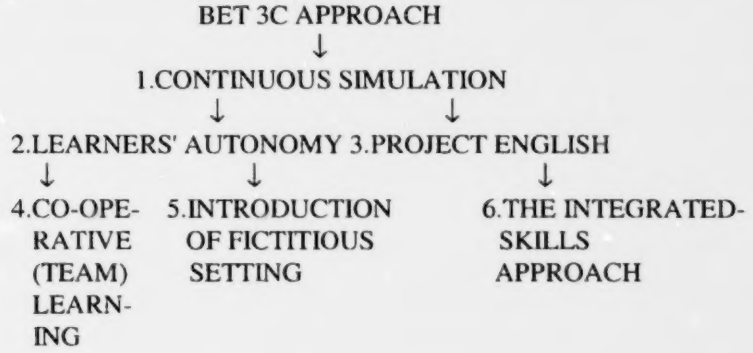
This feature seems essential enough. To become autonomous in continuous simulation, learners have to feel the psychological freedom to use their imagination and fantasy. It is hardly possible if they are limited in using them by the reality of economy in their own country or any other. They may be limited even by not knowing something of that reality since they will be afraid or at least embarrassed to invent. But fictitious setting, imaginary country, imaginary businesses in it, establishing one's own business and operating it in that fictitious imaginary space creates a degree of psychological freedom otherwise unattainable. Acting in a fictitious space, students will not feel the need to keep to strict facts of life and economy, they will not be afraid to speak or write about something not fully known to them, about the things that they are not very sure of. It gives an opportunity of using imagination much more broadly and effectively than when the subject of communication is a real country with its real economy, businesses, etc. The result is creating an environment where students will freely play business while doing continuous simulation and project work. It is a free play ground where learners may feel themselves absolutely at home because it is they who set its rules and laws. That creates good conditions for enhancement of positive motivation and forming highly positive anxiety-free attitudes to everything done in the classroom.

The six features of the coursebook concept discussed above are all interconnected. Their connections are shown in Fig.1.

These features make students' learning quite specific. Thanks to them, learning Business English develops as playing business in English by way of doing continuous simulation and project work. Playing is mostly done autonomously by students in teams, i.e., in pairs or small groups, where the efforts of all the members of a team are pooled to reach a common goal. That is attained by using different ways of

communicating in English (speaking, listening, reading, writing) as instruments for playing business. Those instruments are used interconnectedly and interdependently. Finally, students play business in the fictitious imaginary setting created by themselves. It allows to use fantasy and imagination quite freely, enhances motivation, and stimulates anxiety-free attitudes. It was believed that the suggested approach used in its

Fig.1. Connections and dependencies of the six basic features of the coursebook's concept



entirety could create a specific quasi-natural business environment that made learning fun for students. And when learning is fun, it is usually successful. But the truth of the assumption had to be verified before the publication of the coursebook (the coursebook is with the publishers in Ukraine now, and it will be published during 2002).

That is why the pre-publication version of the coursebook was tried out in teaching practice.

The First Stage of the Coursebook's Experimental Try-Out in Teaching Practice (Method and Results)

The objective of the first stage of the coursebook's experimental try-out was to find out whether it really worked better than the existing coursebooks published in the countries of the former USSR. It was also important to know whether it was not at least worse than the typical Western coursebooks on Business English.

The try-out was organized in 2001 with the second year students of the Department of Economics and Finance at Dnipropetrovsk University of Economics and Law. Classes of English there are held three times a week with two hours for every class. The materials for the try-out were the first four units of the coursebook *Business Projects*. They are *Forms of Businesses, Company Structure, Applying for a Job, Career Profiles and Job Interviews*. One group of 15 students, further called Group A, worked on those four units from the coursebooks during 24 two-hour-long classes. In another group of eight students, further called Group B, work during the same period was organized on the units with similar topics from a typical Western coursebooks on Business English - *Insights into Business* by Michael Lannon, Graham Tullis, and Tonya Trappe (Addison Wesley Longman, 1996). In the third group, Group C, a Russian coursebook *English for a Businessman* by O.I.Antonov (Informpechat, 1991) was used during the same period.

An attempt was made to equalize not only the themes of units, i.e., the content matter, but also the language material to be learned, and the time of study. The groups were also equalized. Students in them were at the same initial level of command of their English and of approximately the same age. The identical male/female ratio in different groups was maintained as well. In fact, everything possible was done to make different coursebooks designed on the basis of different concepts the only variable.

After 24 classes of 48 hours, absolutely identical tests were administered in all the three groups. A speaking test was administered first. Every student had to talk to two independent assessors. He or she had to talk for several minutes on one suggested topic and then to answer four questions. The topics were within the range of the themes and content matter studied. The following topics for speaking were used: *If you were to organize your own business, what form of business would you choose and why?; If you had to employ a top executive for your company, what personal qualities would you look for and why?; What can you say about the management hierarchy in a typical company?; If you are applying for a job in a big company, what papers should you submit? How would you try to interest your prospective employers when completing them? What questions should you get ready to answer during a job interview?; What departments do most companies have and what are their functions?* The questions that followed students' presentations were aimed at clarifying some points in them or could touch upon other topics.

The two independent assessors evaluated every student's speaking using the criterion approach (Cohen, 1994). Seven criteria were employed: 1)relevance to the suggested topic and questions asked; content of what was said; 2)fluency; 3)comparative linguistic accuracy (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation); 4)logical coherence and cohesion of what was said; 5)variety of grammar and vocabulary used by the student when speaking; 6)volume of speaking (not less than 12 sentences should be said in a student's presentation to score top points); 7)correct aural comprehension of questions asked. A student could score up to 10 points according to every criterion so that the maximum score was 70.

The same criterion approach was used in the writing test. Students were given 30 minutes to write a 120-150-word essay on the topic *What personal qualities should a businessman have to be successful? Give your reasons.* The two independent assessors, when reading every students' essay, evaluated it using the following criteria: 1)relevance to the suggested topic; content of what was written in the essay; 2)adequacy of the essay format; 3) linguistic accuracy (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, adequacy of style); 4)logical coherence and cohesion of what was written. 5)variety of grammar and vocabulary used by the student in her/his essay; 6)volume (not less than 120 words for the student to score top points). A student could score up to 10 points according to every criterion so that the maximum score was 60. Both in the speaking test and in the writing test the points given by every assessor according to every criterion were added up and divided into two. In this way the final score of every student for every test was calculated (Underhill, 1987).

In the listening test students were listening to a four-minute long tape-recorded conversation on the structure and management in a fictitious company. The tapescript of the conversation is given below. (The source of the tape-recorded audio text was the class cassette that was a part of teaching materials developed by Tarnopolsky and published in Dnipropetrovsk in 1993. The materials were designed for the course of oral business communication *Starting Business Relations*).

Tapescript

A. Come in!

B. Good afternoon, gentlemen.

A. Oh, here you are! Sylvia, I would like you to meet Mr. Schevchuk. Mr. Schevchuk, that's Miss Sylvia Peters, our Public Relations manager.

B. Glad to meet you, Mr. Schevchuk.

C. How do you do. Nice to meet you.

A. How about a drink, guys? Something refreshing, eh?

B. It would be nice. Coca-Cola is just what I need.

C. And the same for me, please.

A. Well, here you are. And now I'm leaving you alone. I must be off. See you soon.

B. Well, Mr. Schevchuk, Jack has informed me about your problem. I'm ready to answer all your questions about the structure of our company.

C. Miss Peters, first of all I would like to know about the functions of departments which are under the Managing director.

B. I think that the functions of the Sales and Production departments are quite clear. As to the Human Resources department, it takes care of the personnel, its recruitment, and training. The Finance department is responsible for finance and accounting, and the Management Services department is in charge of rationalization throughout the company. Finally, the R&D department works on new products development. It works in close contact with the Regions. Each department has its own manager or director.

C. And what about the Regions?

B. Well, Regions, or regional departments, are under direct control of the Managing Director, as you probably know. They report to him. But Regional Managers are supported by two Sections - Marketing and Technical Services. The Section heads, or leaders, are accountable to Regional managers. They work with the Regions on the marketing and technical problems.

C. I see that the Managing Director is the key figure in the company. He is in charge of everything and everybody is accountable to him.

B. You are right in principle. But you must remember that a big company, such as ours, can have its subsidiaries abroad. For example, we have three subsidiaries: Rutland Canada, Rutland Australia and Rutland Greece. The subsidiaries report their activities to the Export Sales department of the parent company, i.e., to our offices here in London. The Export Sales department, in its turn, is accountable directly to the Board of directors and not to the Managing director. Well, that's a brief survey of the management of our company.

C. Thank you very much. You helped me a lot. I still have many questions, but don't want to take too much of your time. But can we meet again?

B. Yes, sure. It would be nice. Let me look into my diary. Will tomorrow at 10 a.m. do for you? I'll have a full hour to answer all your questions.

C. Wonderful. Thank you. I'll be on the spot at 10 sharp. Good-bye.

B. So long. See you tomorrow.

After listening, learners had to answer ten comprehension questions in writing: 1)*What departments are under the Managing Director?*; 2)*What is the function of the Human Resources department?*; 3)*What is the Management Services department in charge of?*; 4)*What does the R&D department work on?*; 5)*Who directly controls*

Regional departments?; 6)*What two sections support Regional Managers?*; 7)*Who are Section Heads accountable to?*; 8)*Who is the key figure in a company?*; 9)*Whom do the subsidiaries report to?*; 10)*What body is the Export Sales department accountable to?* Every correct answer allowed to score one point so that the maximum score could be 10 points.

Finally, in the reading test the students were given ten minutes to read a one-and-a-half page text of about 1,000 words. The text discussing different forms of businesses is given in full below. (The text for reading was taken from pages 36-37 of a Ukrainian coursebook *English for Economists and Businessmen* edited by V.K. Shpak and published in 2000 in Kyiv by Vystcha Shkola Publishing House).

Text for reading

There are numerous reasons that make people think about owning business of their own. Personal independence, unlimited profit potential, the opportunity to work at something that they really love and at hours they choose are some of the reasons people have given for trying entrepreneurship. Many business leaders begin their careers as entrepreneurs after four years of undergraduate college training and even additional graduate school training. Others become successful entrepreneurs without special training.

Many colleges now offer programs that teach students how to start and operate a business. Basic information is combined with hands-on experience and the advice of successful business consultants. These programs help potential entrepreneurs decide whether their own ideas are good and how to follow through with them. With the high rate of business failure, this approach can prevent personal financial losses.

A common way to learn about a business, and the opportunities for starting one similar to it, is to learn while working for someone else. It provides a source of steady income to people while they are planning to start their own businesses. About 50 percent of entrepreneurs start their businesses in industries in which they have some experience.

Evidence shows that people who come from families whose members were in business themselves are more likely to start their own companies. Unfortunately, the record shows that two out of three new businesses fail within their first four years.

Small businesses face many problems. Bad economic times affect small business more than they do big business. In addition, small business profits tend to fall faster, and small businesses are more likely to fail.

What are the problems that face small business now? In January 1985 the National Federation of Independent Business reported that the four top problems facing small business at that time were taxes, slow sales, the high cost of borrowing money and competition from other businesses.

In a large business the tasks of organizing and operating are done by many hired managers.

A corporation is one kind of business organization. Other kinds of business organizations are sole proprietorships and partnerships. Sole proprietorships are the most numerous kind of business organization, but most are very small. The reason for their popularity is that they are the easiest and least costly to organize.

Sole proprietors own all the profits of their enterprises, and they are their "own bosses", free to make whatever changes they please. They have minimal legal

restrictions and do not have to pay the special taxes placed on corporations. Sole proprietors also have opportunity to achieve success and recognition through their individual efforts. There are also disadvantages. A very serious one is the unlimited liability that each proprietor faces. All debts and all problems associated with the business belong to the owner.

A second disadvantage of the sole proprietorship is that it has limited capital. The money that a proprietor can raise is limited by the amount of his or her savings and ability to borrow. Also, when the owner dies, the business dies. Other disadvantages may include lack of opportunities for employees, limitations of size and lack of management resources.

A partnership is a business organization that is owned by two or more persons. Partnerships offer certain advantages over sole proprietorships:

** Partners bring additional funds to a proprietorship.*

** Partners can bring fresh ideas and talents to business organizations.*

** Like the sole proprietorship, partnerships are relatively easy to form and are not subject to special taxation.*

Partnerships have the following disadvantages:

** In many cases, each of the partners is subject to unlimited liability. Partners are individually responsible for all the debts of the business. In other words, if the business were to fail, its creditors would have the right to recover their money from any, or all, of the partners.*

A corporation is a business organization created under a government charter. Ownership of a corporation is represented by shares of stock, and for that reason corporate owners are known as stockholders. One feature of the corporation is that the courts treat it as a legal "person". It can, for example, sue or be sued and enter into contracts, and it must pay taxes. There are some other types of business organizations. They are: the corporation for small business, not-for-profit corporation, government-owned corporations, cooperatives and franchises.

After reading, the text was taken away from the students and they were requested to answer ten comprehension questions in writing: 1)*What reasons make many people start their own business?*; 2)*What two ways of learning how to conduct your own business are discussed in the article?*; 3)*What number of small businesses manage to be successful in the first four years?*; 4)*What were the major four problems facing small businesses in 1985?*; 5)*What is the most numerous kind of business among different forms of private businesses?*; 6)*What six advantages of sole proprietorships are listed in the article?*; 7)*What six disadvantages of sole proprietorships are listed in the article?*; 8)*What three advantages of partnerships are listed in the article?*; 9)*What two disadvantages of partnerships are listed in the article?*; 10)*What six other forms of businesses (except sole proprietorships and partnerships) are listed in the article?* Again every correct answer allowed to score one point so that the maximum score could be 10 points.

The results of testing are shown in Table 1 (mean figures for every group).

The figures in the table show the advantage of the results achieved by Group A in comparison with the two other groups. That advantage may become more visible if test results are shown graphically, as it is done in Fig. 2.

The test results, as presented in Table 1 and Figure 1, prove that the students from Group A have attained a considerably higher level in the development of their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. As different coursebooks were practically the only variables, higher achievements in Group A could only be the

results of higher efficiency of the coursebook used in that group and the course organized on its basis. It proves the advantages of the coursebook *Business Projects* and the concept underlying it over the other two coursebooks - at any rate, for the given students and in the given conditions of learning.

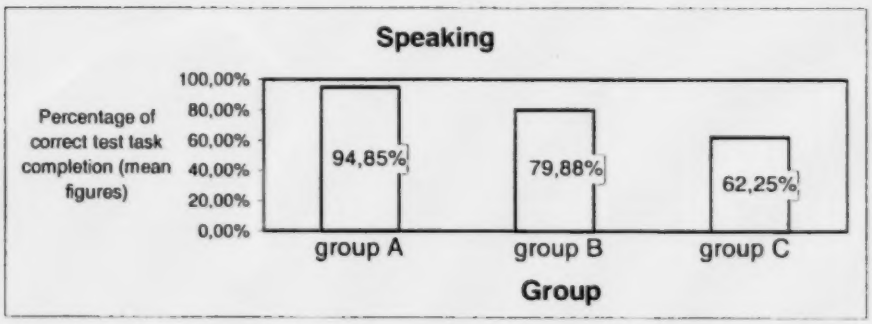
At that stage, the advantages of the coursebook *Business Projects* and of its concept were also proved in a different aspect - students' attitudes and motivation. Every student from every group was interviewed after taking her or his test. They had

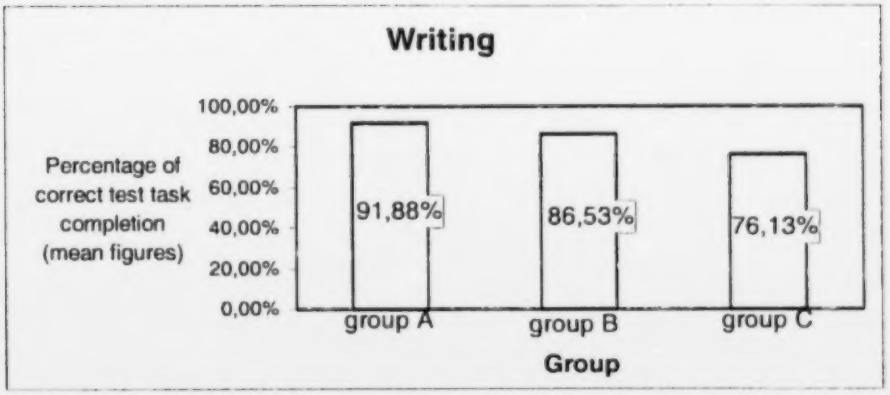
Table 1

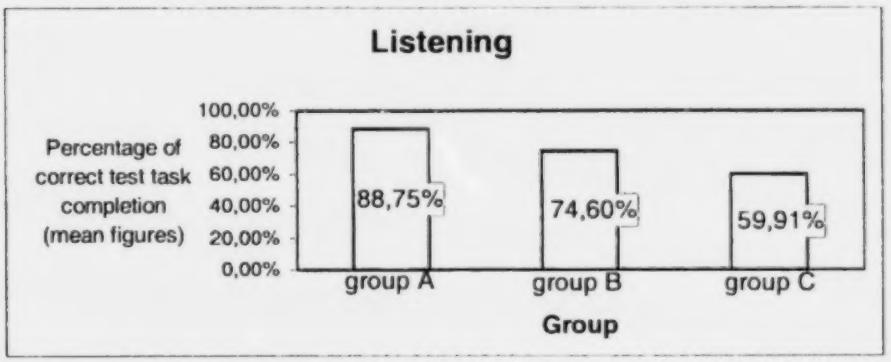
First stage results of testing skills in speaking, writing, listening and reading in three groups (A, B, C) - mean scores for every group

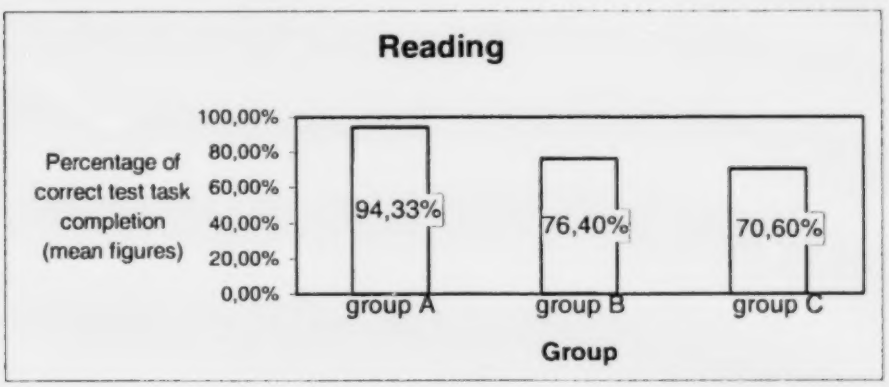
Test	Speaking	Writing	Listening	Reading
Group	mean score for the group (out of 70 points), %	mean score for the group (out of 60 points), %	mean score for the group (out of 10 points), %	mean score for the group (out of 10 points), %
A	66.4 (94.85%)	55.13 (91.88%)	8.87 (88.75%)	9.43 (94.33%)
B	55.92 (79.88%)	51.92 (86.53%)	7.46 (74.6%)	7.64 (76.4%)
C	43.58 (62.25%)	45.68 (76.13%)	5.99 (59.91%)	7.06 (70.6%)

Fig.2. Differences of test results in three groups (A, B, C) - in percentage of correct test task completion









to answer questions about the coursebook used in their Business English course, whether they liked it or not, what exactly they liked and disliked, whether it was fun to learn using it, etc. Interviewing made it clear that only the students from Group A were fully satisfied with their coursebook and even enthusiastic about it since they really enjoyed learning when using it.

Therefore, the conclusion may be made that the concept and the coursebook written on its basis really proved their worth in teaching practice and demonstrated their advantages at the first stage of experimental try-out.

The Second Stage of the Coursebook's Experimental Try-Out in Teaching Practice (Method and Results). Comparison of the Results of Two Stages

The second stage of the coursebook's experimental try-out was conducted to find out whether the gap in skill development results in groups A, B, and C remained the same, widened, or narrowed with the continued work on the same three coursebooks that were used in the same three groups of students. The try-out was organized in the second semester of the 2001/2002 academic year. The materials for the try-out in group A were the following four units of the coursebook *Business Projects*: *Domestic and World Economy; Business Objectives, Strategy, and Competition; Marketing; Production.* The work of students from Groups B and C during the try-out period concentrated on units with similar topics (themes), but from the coursebooks used in those group - see above. Just like at the first stage, the try-out was held during 24 classes or 48 class hours. The speaking, writing, listening, and reading tests administered to the students of all the three groups were organized absolutely identically to those at stage 1.

In the speaking test the students had to speak on the following topics (one topic for one student): *What can you say about the state of Ukrainian economy today? What should be done to improve it?; If you were an owner of a firm or company, what business strategy would you use? Why?; What are the objectives of any business? How can they be achieved?; Every business develops in the conditions of competition. What should a businessman/businesswoman do to survive and win in the struggle against his/her competitors?; How should production in a firm or company be organized?; Why is marketing important for successful business? What does marketing include?; How should market research be organized?* After making his or her presentation, every student answered four questions of two independent assessors.

In the writing test the students had to write an essay according to the following task *Write an essay of 200 words on the importance and organization of marketing.*

In the listening test they were listening to the tape-recorded text and answered ten comprehension questions (in writing). The tapescript of the audio text is given below. The source of the tape-recorded audio text was the same that was used at the preceding stage.

Tapescript

A Class at a Business School

A. *Last time we came to a conclusion that competition is one of the most important factors we must take into account in defining the firm's strategy. What factors in your opinion influence the competitiveness of a firm?*

B. *First of all, I think, it's the quality of its products and their attractiveness. I mean how attractively they are presented.*

C. *Not less important is the firm's profitability and the price at which its products are sold.*

D. *And you mustn't forget how big is the firm in terms of market share. And that depends on how long ago it has entered the market.*

A. *Surely, not only on that. Suppose a firm has entered the market recently. But it makes heavy investments into new technology. Thereby, it increases quality and reliability. Then this firm is in a good position to overtake its older competitors soon.*

D. But the firm's reputation is also a market value. If a firm has been in the market long enough and is known for high quality and reliability of its products, new firms will have difficulties in overtaking and surpassing it.

C. Sure. But those new firms can grow rapidly by investing heavily into development. Then their prices will become lower and their market share will increase with the increase of the turnover.

D. But it can be only a long-term program because, at first, their annual return, that is their profitability, will be rather low.

B. Well, only long-term programs pay in the end.

A. We can now enumerate the factors influencing the firm's competitiveness. First of all it's the quality, reliability and attractiveness of its products. Then we must take into account the profitability of the firm, its annual return. Very important question is the price of the products - whether it is low, medium, or high. Investments into development help to overtake your competitors. And last but not least is the firm's market share, the duration of its presence on the market, and its reputation.

B. Yes, so many factors determine the results of a company's work and its position.

A. True. And next time we'll be present at a meeting of a company's administration where you'll hear those results discussed.

The ten comprehension questions to the text for listening included: 1)*What are the factors determining the competitiveness of a firm?*; 2)*How can a new firm, which does not have an established reputation on the market as yet, rapidly grow and increase its market share?*; 3)*Will the firm's profits be high at the start if it plans to grow rapidly and increase its market share?*; 4)*What investments help to overtake your competitors?*; 5)*What should the price of firm's products be if it wants to overtake its competitors?*; 6)*What is the importance of firm's reputation?*; 7)*What increases the quality and reliability of goods manufactured by the firm?*; 8)*What is the attractiveness of goods manufactured by the firm?*; 9)*What accompanies the increase of the firm's market share?*; 10)*If a firm invests heavily into new technology to increase profits, does attaining this goal require a short term or a long-term program?*

In the reading test the following text was read (retrieved from the Internet: http://www.wikipedia.com/wiki/Japan/Economy).

Text for reading

Japan's Economics

Japans industrialized, free-market economy is the second-largest in the world after the United States. Its economy is highly efficient and competitive in areas linked to international trade, but productivity is far lower in areas such as agriculture, distribution, and services. After achieving one of the highest economic growth rates in the world from the 1960s through the 1980s, the Japanese economy slowed dramatically in the early 1990s, when the "bubble economy" collapsed. Its reservoir of industrial leadership and technicians, well-educated and industrious work force, high savings and investment rates, and intensive promotion of industrial development and foreign trade have produced a mature industrial economy. Japan has few natural resources, and trade helps it earn the foreign exchange needed to purchase raw materials for its economy.

While Japan's long-term economic prospects are considered good, Japan is currently in its worst recession since World War II. Plummeting stock and real estate prices marked the end of the "bubble economy" of the late 1980s. The impact of the Asian financial crisis also has been substantial. Real GDP in Japan grew at an

average of roughly 1% yearly between 1991-98, compared to growth in the 1980s of about 4% per year. Growth in Japan in this decade has been slower than growth in other major industrial nations. The Government of Japan has forecast growth in Japan fiscal year 2001 at 1.7%. A number of economic indicators remain in negative territory, and growth for first quarter 2001 was 0.2%.

Agriculture, Energy, and Minerals

Only 15% of Japan's land is suitable for cultivation. The agricultural economy is highly subsidized and protected. With per hectare crop yields among the highest in the world, Japan maintains an overall agricultural self-sufficiency rate of about 50% on fewer than 5.6 million cultivated hectares (14 million acres). Japan normally produces a slight surplus of rice but imports large quantities of wheat, sorghum, and soybeans, primarily from the United States. Japan is the largest market for U.S. agricultural exports.

Given its heavy dependence on imported energy, Japan has aimed to diversify its sources. Since the oil shocks of the 1970s, Japan has reduced dependence on petroleum as a source of energy from more than 75% in 1973 to about 57% at present. Other important energy sources are coal, liquefied natural gas, nuclear power, and hydropower.

Deposits of gold, magnesium, and silver meet current industrial demands, but Japan is dependent on foreign sources for many of the minerals essential to modern industry. Iron ore, coke, copper, and bauxite must be imported, as must many forest products.

Labor: *Japan's labor force consists of some 64 million workers, 40% of whom are women. Labor union membership is about 12 million. The unemployment rate is currently 4.9% - a post-war high. In 1989, the predominantly public sector union confederation, SOHYO (General Council of Trade Unions of Japan), merged with RENGO (Japanese Private Sector Trade Union Confederation) to form the Japanese Trade Union Confederation.*

GDP*: purchasing power parity - $2.95 trillion (1999 est.)*

GDP *- real growth rate: 0.3% (1999 est.)*

GDP *- per capita: purchasing power parity - $23,400 (1999 est.)*

GDP *- composition by sector: agriculture: 2% industry: 35% services: 63% (1999 est.)*

Population below poverty line: NA%

Household income or consumption by percentage share: lowest 10%: NA% highest 10%: NA%

Inflation rate (consumer prices): -0.8% (1999 est.)

Labor force*: 67,76 million (November 1999)*

Labor force *– by occupation: trade and services 65%, industry 30%, agriculture, forestry and fishing 5%*

Unemployment rate*: 4,7% (1999 est.)*

Budget*: revenues: $463 billion expenditures: $809, including capital expenditures (public works only) of about $94 billion (FY00/01 est.)*

Industries*: among world's largest and technologically advanced producers of motor vehicles, electronic equipment, machine tools, steel and nonferrous metals, ships, chemicals; textiles, processed foods*

Industrial production growth rate*: -0,1% (1999 est.)*

Electricity *– production: 995,982 billion kWh (1998)*

***Electricity** – production by source: fossil fuel: 56.68% hydro: 8,99% nuclear: 31,93% other:2,4% (1998)*
***Electricity**: consumption: 926,263 billion kWh (1998)*
***Electricity** – exports: 0 kWh (1998)*
***Electricity** - imports: 0 kWh (1998)*
***Agriculture** – products: rice, sugar beets, vegetables, fruit; pork, poultry, dairy products, eggs; fish*
***Exports**: $413 billion (f.o.b., 1999 est.)*
***Exports**: commodities: motor vehicles, semiconductors, office machinery, chemicals*
***Exports**: partners: US 31%, Taiwan 7%, China 5,5%, South Korea 5,4% Hong Kong 5,2% (1999)*
***Imports**: $306 billion (c.i.f., 1999 est.)*
***Imports**: commodities: fuels, foodstuffs, chemicals, textiles, office machinery*
***Exports**: partners: US 22%, China 4%, South Korea 5,1%, Australia 4,2%, Taiwan 4,1% (1999)*
***Debt** – external: $NA*
***Economic aid** – donor: ODA, $9,1 billion (1999)*
***Currency**: yen*
***Exchange rates**: yen per US$1 – 105,16 (January 2000), 113,91 (1999), 130,91 (1998), 120,99 (1997), 108,78 (1996), 94,06 (1995)*
***Fiscal year**: 1 April – 31 March*

After reading, ten comprehension questions were to be answered in writing: 1)*What place does the economy of Japan occupy in the world?*; 2)*What can you say about the economic situation in Japan now?*; 3)*What is the situation in Japan's agriculture?*; 4)*What are the principal sources of energy used in Japan?*; 5)*What can you say about the labor resources of the country?*; 6)*What was Japan's budget in 2000/2001 financial year?*; 7)*What branches of industry are most developed in Japan?*; 8)*What does Japan export, and what countries were its principal export partners in 1999?*; 9)*What does Japan import, and what countries were its principal import partners in 1999?*; 10)*What are the dates of a financial year in Japan?*

The evaluation and scoring procedure was absolutely identical as compared to stage 1. The test results are shown in Table 2. Again, only mean figures are given for every group and every kind of test.

Table 2

Second stage results of testing skills in speaking, writing, listening and reading in three groups (A, B, C) - mean scores for every group

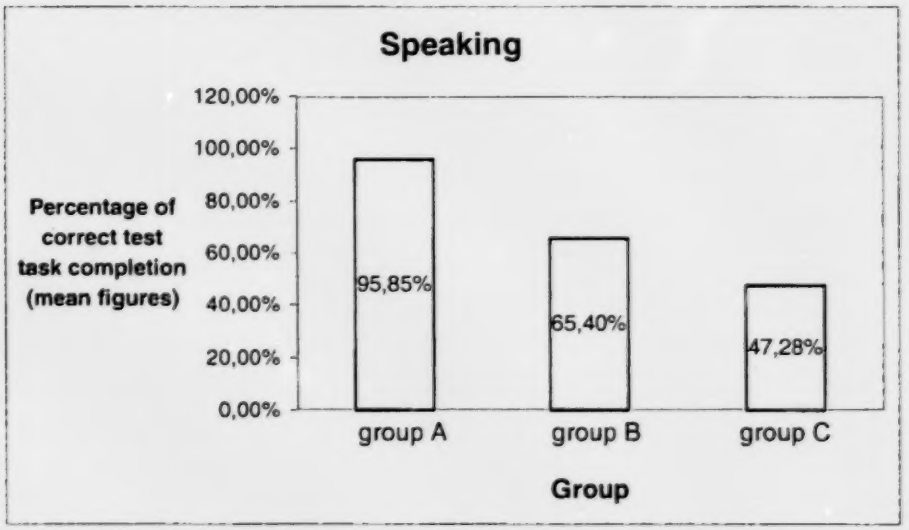
Test	Speaking	Writing	Listening	Reading
Group	mean score for the group (out of 70 points), %	mean score for the group (out of 60 points), %	mean score for the group (out of 10 points), %	mean score for the group (out of 10 points), %
A	67.1 (95.85%)	57.78 96.6%	9.08 90.8%	9.12 91.2%
B	45.8 (65.4%)	46.6 77.66%	7.31 73.1%	7.29 72.9%
C	33.1 (47.28%)	37.4 (62.3%)	4.64 (46.4%)	4.61 46.1%)

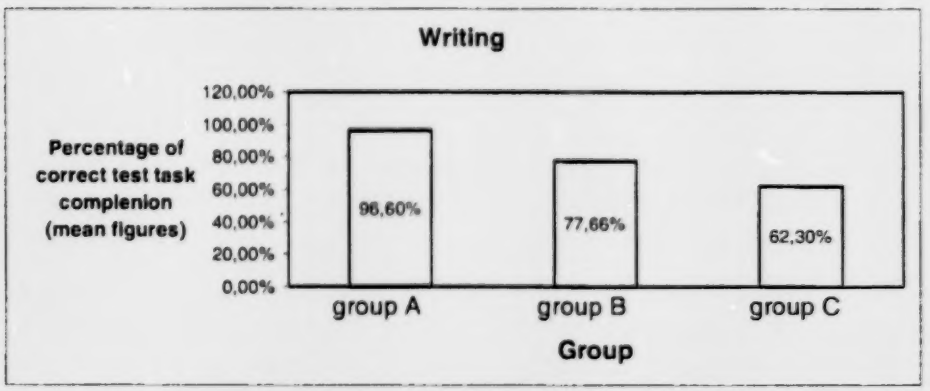
The differences of three groups are more visibly shown in graphic form in Fig. 3.

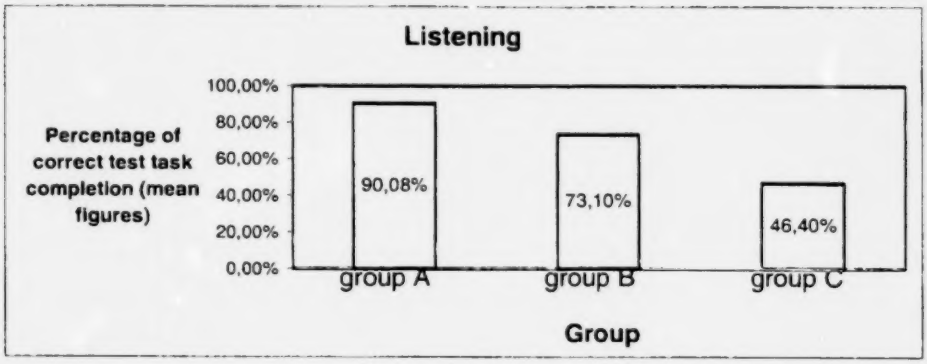
The data shown in Table 2 and Figure 3 again demonstrate the obvious and indubitable advantage of the students of group A over the other two groups. It means that the coursebook under discussion has been proven to be the most efficient in comparison with a typical Western Business English coursebook, occupying only the second place, and a typical Russian coursebook being the least effective.

But comparison of the data obtained during the two stages of experimental try-out shows one more interesting phenomenon. It becomes obvious from the comparative graph in Fig. 4.

Fig. 3. Differences of test results in three groups (A, B, C) - in percentage of correct test task completion







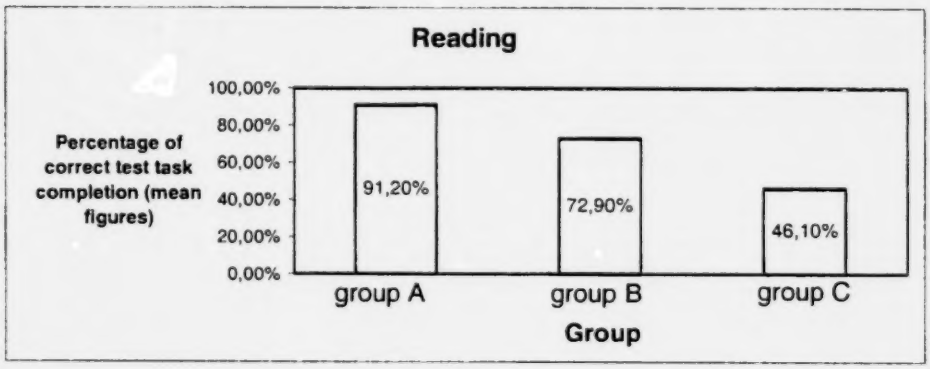
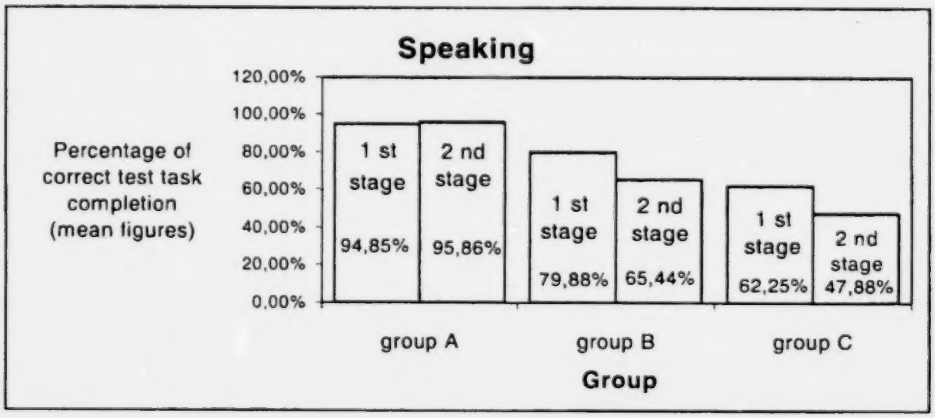
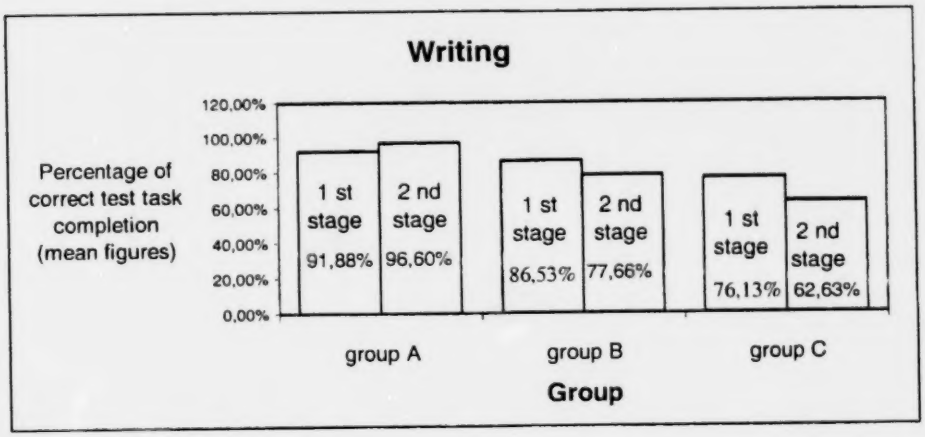
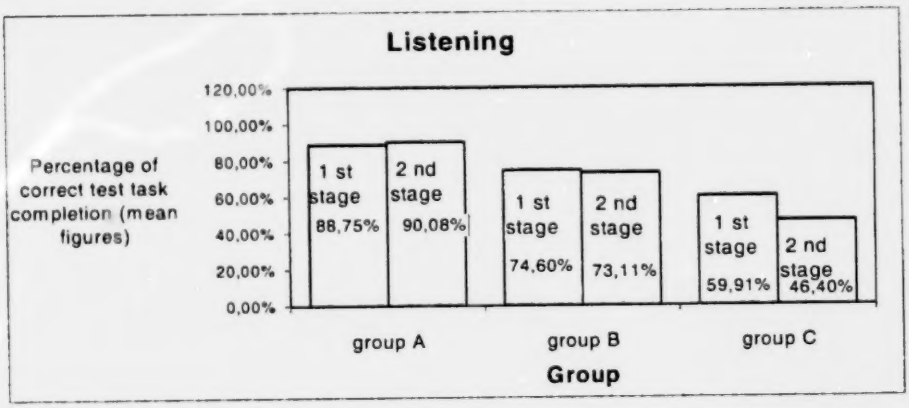
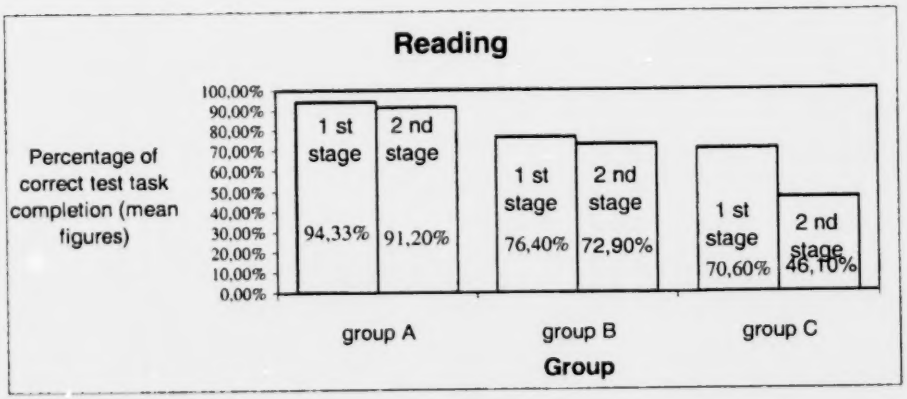


Fig. 4. Stage 1 and stage 2 comparative test results in three groups (A, B, C) - in percentage of correct test task completion









The data given in Figure 4 demonstrate that the gap in the test results between group A, on the one hand, and groups B and C, on the other hand, not only remains in the course of students' progressing from one stage of learning to another one. This gap has a marked tendency to grow. It means that the students from group A develop their skills in speaking, writing, listening, and reading not only better and more effectively than the students from the two other groups. They develop those skills considerably

faster distancing themselves further and further away from the students of groups B and C in learning results with every new stage of learning. That fastness in skills development is apparently of paramount importance for the ultimate success and achieving the best possible learning outcomes in the given conditions.

The results of the two stages of experimental try-out may be considered as a sufficient proof of the efficiency of the suggested coursebook, the concept underlying its design, and the method of teaching and learning that they condition. Those results prove the advantages of the coursebook, concept, and method under discussion in comparison with the other types of Business English coursebooks used in Ukraine.

Conclusion

The concept and design of the coursebok *Business Projects* discussed in this article are based on its six original features that have never before been used in such a combination in any other coursebook for Business English studies. Those features include: 1)the use of continuous simulation as the principal learning activity that creates a quasi-natural business environment and makes learning fun for students; 2)the use of project work as the activity accompanying and reinforcing continuous simulation; 3)learners' autonomy; 4)organization of classroom activities on the basis of cooperative or team learning; 5)the integrated-skill approach so that speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills are developed interconnectedly and interdependently supporting and reinforcing each other; 6)the introduction of fictitious setting that allows students to use their fantasy and imagination freely, enhances learning motivation, and stimulates relaxed anxiety-free attitudes to learning.

The experimental try-out of the coursebook in question in comparison with one typical Western and one typical Russian Business English coursebook has proven its considerable advantages and higher efficiency bo.h in developing learners' communicative skills of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in English and in enhancing the students' positive learning motivation. It has also been found out that using the coursebooks *Business Projects* substantially accelerated the development of learners' Business English communication skills in comparison with the other coursebooks.

That proves the overall efficiency of the courcebook and validity of the concept underlying its design for the given conditions of learning Business English.

References:

Benson, P. & Voller, P. (Eds.) (1997). *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning*, London and New York: Longman.

Brinton, D.M., Snow, M.A. & Wesche M.B. (1989). *Content-Based Second Language Instruction*. New York: Newbury House Publishers.

Cohen, A.D. (1994). *Assessing Language Ability in the Classroom*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Ellis, M. & Johnson, C. (1994). *Teaching Business English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fried-Booth, D.L. (1996). *Project Work*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kessler, C. (Ed.) (1992). *Cooperative Language Learning: A Teacher's Resource Book*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Oxford, R. (September 2001). Integrated skills in the ESL/EFL classroom. *ERIC Digest*, EDO-FL-01-05. Available: http://www/cal.org/ericcll/0105oxford.html.

Prabhu, N.S. (1987). *Second Language Pedagogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tarnopolsky, O. (2000). Business English teaching: Imaginative continuous simulations and critical analysis tasks. *Business Issues. The publication of the Business English Special Interest Group*. Issue 2/2000, 12-14.
Underhill, N. (1987). *Testing Spoken Language: A Handbook of Oral Testing Techniques*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

for Laurel Wirsbo, Acquisitions Coordinator

FL027638

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Playing Business in the Classroom: Designing a New Type of Business English CourseBook	
Author(s): TARNOPOLSKY, Oleg; KOZHUSHKO, Svitlana	
Corporate Source:	Publication Date:

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

☒

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

☐

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

☐

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature:	Printed Name/Position/Title: TARNOPOLSKY, Oleg, Head of the Department of Methods in Foreign Language Teaching, Full Professor, Doctor of Pedagogy
Organization/Address: Dnipropetrovsk University of Economics and Law / vul. Chkalova, 4, apt. 8, Dnipropetrovsk, 49029, Ukraine	Telephone: 38(056) 770-1969 FAX: 38(056) 778-5666
	E-Mail Address: olegtarn@fregat.com Date: April, 3, 2003

(over)